

You will be pleased to hear that things are well underway for the the Australian Lowline Cattle Muster Down Under, the big event at Sydney Royal 2010 where Australian Lowlines will be the featured breed. ***This will be the biggest and most exciting Lowline event ever held and Lowline breeders throughout Australia and the world should make an effort to attend.*** (See Story Page 7.)

In 2008 we improved our communications channels, first with our quarterly "Join Us in Lowline Country" newsletter, now sent electronically to all members having e-mail, while a cut down printed version is mailed to those who do not.

In December we formally launched our new interactive website, www.lowline-country.com, which allows all members to contribute information and ideas to each other, our promotion groups and our council. (See Story Page 11.)

Although we were not successful in obtaining a Commonwealth AgFund Grant in 2008, the planned quantitative research will still proceed, although at a slower rate.

Our Export Marketing Development grant application was successful, however, and will contribute to recovery of export oriented expenditure for the next five years.

Climatic and financial conditions have, unsurprisingly, caused a plateau

in membership and a small decline in registrations and transfers of pedigree Lowline cattle. Fortunately our reserves are adequate enough to see us through this difficult period but we are carefully evaluating expenditure and possible revenue including potential sponsorships.

It is pleasing to be able to say that while overall membership numbers are static there has been a growth in enthusiastic new stud, associate and commercial members, school memberships and junior members.

Emma Germany and Lana Kuipers were our Youth Ambassadors in 2008 and represented us at Denver in January. Their enthusiasm and that of other Youth Members is an ongoing catalyst in our association and will have a major influence in the future development of the Australian Lowline cattle breed.

The American Lowline Registry ambassador, Sky Battles visited three states while here, was a worthy representative for the ALR and impressed all who met her. (See Story Page 17.)

Our nine promotional groups in Australia and New Zealand had a busy year in 2008 being involved in shows, expos, field days, workshops, training days and educational programmes.

Their efforts, which are sometimes overlooked, have helped ensure that Australian Lowlines are always well

presented and promoted at events from Royal shows to grass roots field days. Thank you to all involved.

If you're an ALCA member and are not yet involved with your local promotion group, please join up and help share the load of promoting the breed. You will find it particularly rewarding in this time of improved communications.

Your councillors had a record nine meetings in 2008 (fortunately six were by telephone conference) and I thank them for their great support.

New councillor, Lee Labrie quickly came up to speed and her drive and direction have complemented the great and diverse skills of Andrew Ristrom, Tammy Breuer, Keith Smith, Sally Yearbury and Sue Foureur.

I am pleased to welcome Tim Franzmann who has also been a councillor since September 2008 and is working hard on Beef Australia.

David McDonald, our Executive Officer, has been almost as indispensable as my wife Ann in supporting me in my ALCA responsibilities. Thank you both.

I wish all members a most successful 2009. In spite of all climatic and financial challenges, the quality and strength of our members and our Australian Lowline cattle will see us stronger at the end.

John Rowe

